

Adwalton Moor - Thursday 13th October 2022

Walkers turned up in their droves today - to discover Idle and to see what delights the village has to offer. Our numbers being boosted with our friends from South Pennine, Pete, Ian H and Andrew joining us for our seventh walk of this year's autumn series, along with Ian S, making a welcome return to the Thursday group, last being out in October 2021 on the Tong Garden Centre walk – that's the problem of still having to work for a living!!! We headed off into the early morning mist, eleven in number- almost a platoon!!! We were headed to Adwalton Moor, the scene of a battle on 30th June 1643, between the Royalist and Parliamentary armies during the English Civil War. We did though have a nine mile hike to reach the battlefield, with an ETA of 10.45am - albeit 379 years too late for the battle itself!!! On the actual day, Parliamentary troops did march from Bradford to meet the Earl of Newcastle's troops on the moor. It was felt the unfortified city of Bradford would be too difficult to defend and a surprise skirmish on open moorland, would give a tactical advantage to Lord Fairfax's men. We were therefore walking in the footsteps of our Bradfordian ancestors - but I would hope with more chance of surviving the day!!!

The early kit inspection seemed to catch the walkers by surprise and they were showing me, maps, compasses, first aid kits and survival bags, when I was looking for pike and musket, with sufficient supplies of lead shot and gunpowder!!! How can you fight a battle against royalist cavalry with sword and cannon, when you are only armed with a walking pole and a bag of jelly babies!!!

We were quickly into West Wood at Apperley Bridge, following the Leeds Country Way through, Bill Wood, Round Wood and Ravenscliffe Wood - to complete the full set of woods I was hoping for another celebrity meeting, this time with legendary guitarist and Rolling Stone rocker - Ron Wood but unfortunately he was busy!!! On reaching the old and sadly now derelict Blue Pig at Fagley, we headed towards Stone Stile Farm and Woodhall playing fields. Crossing the Leeds/Bradford Cycle Super Highway at Woodhall, we dropped down Daleside Road to Ducketts Crossing, reaching the outskirts of Pudsey before the descent into Black Carr Wood via the Banks. On reaching Keeper Lane, we had our first serious climb of the day. It appears never ending but we did eventually emerge at the pinfold on Tong Lane, where we paused to regroup and capture our breath. We were now only 30 minutes from the battlefield and there was palpable tension in the air!!! But this was eased by the realisation we were also only 30 minutes away from our early lunch- you cannot fight a battle on an empty stomach!!! Taking the path beside the old school room, we dropped down to Ringshaw Beck and crossed Manor Golf course to reach Back Lane, which we followed into Drighlington. Passing the cricket ground we were soon on the edge of Adwalton Moor. Luckily the café at the Community and Sports Hub had reopened after recently being closed – It was the first day of the reopening and the new owners were pleased to greet us. There is a history board on the outside wall, which gives excellent detail of the events of the day in 1643.

After our lunch or with it still being a little before midday, I could be trendy and say Brunch, after all I do think of myself as bit of a 'hipster' – if you want to be young, think young!!! Maybe in future we should call our stops, brunch, lunch and the afternoon tea stop, which could morph into a high tea? Before long we could all be walking in dinner jackets..... Hmm - I think it got away from me a little there, back to reality, after our lunch, which was mainly bacon sandwiches and a vegan breakfast for Mike, we went onto the battlefield, where

at first we were stood amongst the parliamentary troops, led by Lord Ferdinando Fairfax and his son Sir Thomas Fairfax - with the Royalist forces on the ridge opposite. Crossing the moor, we were able to take up the position of the royalist forces under the command of the Earl of Newcastle. I won't go into any more detail of the battle or give any spoilers!!! If you want to know who won, you should have been there – that's on the walk not at the battle!!! The same walk will be in the programme again next autumn. I also hope to offer a shorter version as a history walk next summer, where we will walk from Adwalton Moor to Bolling Hall, where the Royalist forces stationed whilst laying siege to Bradford and with a bit of luck we will be able to meet Frances Tempest!!!

Departing the battlefield, (we had not lost any troops), although Trevor claimed he had been hit in the eye by an arrow, until I explained to him that was a different battle in 1066!!! We headed to Cockersdale valley. Following Tong Beck to Roker Lane we picked up Pudsey Beck, following it to Sisters Wood, where we had our second steep ascent of the day to Fulneck, and we, or should I say Madeleine, Judi and Christine had 'High Tea' at café 54!!! After our Earl Grey, cupcakes, cucumber sandwiches and scones we headed to Owlcotes Hill, dropping down to New Pudsey Station and Pudsey Civic Hall before crossing the Leeds Ring Road via the Priesthorpe School footbridge. Picking up Priesthorpe Lane this week we headed over Woodhall Hills towards Calverley and the steep descent of Calverley Cutting. It was then just a short climb through Thorpe Edge back to Idle Village, arriving at 3.40pm - GPS's checked and 21 miles agreed. Then followed the obligatory short walk to the White Bear, where we were able to take advantage of the late afternoon sunshine and sit outside in the bear garden. This concluded another entertaining and hopefully informative Thursday walk.

Next week, we will be heading north to the spa town of Ilkley, where a dip in the cold water plunge at White Wells is optional but a visit to La Stazione, (the station café to non-Italian speakers), is compulsory. Whether this is for brunch or lunch is still to be decided!!!